

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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News Release

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New Firebreaks Improve Safety and Management Potential for Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge

"I couldn't be happier," reports Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge Maintenance Worker Kevin Keeler. "These firebreaks will be a lot easier to maintain for the next several years."

Keeler is referring to the contract work done on Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge in mid-August. Hazardous fuels funding allowed the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to improve three firebreaks on the refuge that had brush encroaching into and overhanging the breaks. This was beginning to create a tunnel effect, making it difficult for equipment to pass through.

These firebreaks are part of a network of clearings the refuge maintains to slow or stop a wildfire and to give firefighters access to fight wildfires and conduct controlled burns. The firebreaks will be put to good use this fall and winter with the prescribed burning the refuge has planned.

If not regularly burned, vegetation can build up on the refuge's wildlands and provide fuel for large wildfires. Controlled burning will reduce the amount of fuel buildup and decrease the risk of wildfires to homes bordering the refuge, as well as improving wildlife habitat.